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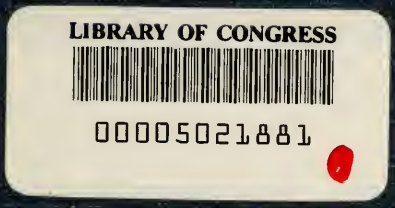

THE MEXICAN WAR.

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

ANNUAL FAST, 1847,

BY MILTON P. BRAMAN,
PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN DANVERS.

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SERMON:

DEUTERONOMY chap. 2. v 5. Meddle not with them ; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth ; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession.

In the journey which the children of Israel made from Egypt to Canaan, their course lay through the country of Edom. As they approached its confines, they asked leave to pass them, on condition of refraining from all injury to the inhabitants and their possessions. The Edomites peremptorily refused, and met them with hostile demonstrations. The Israelites then changed the direction of their route, and proceeded southward to the Red Sea, whence they turned their course to the east, and after having "compassed mount Seir many days," they were commanded to advance northward towards their destined residence; and as their passage would again carry them through the territories of Edom, though in a part less capable of hostile resistance than the western frontier, they were strictly charged not to molest the inhabitants, nor take any thing from them, not even food and water, without paying an equivalent price. They were reminded that not a foot-breadth of the land was to be wrested from its owners ; for it was assigned by the Divine Proprietor to the descendants of Esau. There was an hereditary enmity on the part of the Edomites against the Israelites, which broke out into the hostilities before mentioned, as the latter drew near their borders. The insult which the Israelites had received, and the great inconvenience to which they had been put, in being compelled to take such a circuitous course to gain the object of their journey, were calculated to inspire sentiments of hatred and revenge, and to urge them to acts of retaliation, when opportunity was presented, by the passage of the whole nation through the most defenceless portion of the enemies' dominion.

The northern portion of Edom lying in vicinity to the southern boundary of Palestine, it would have been very convenient for the

Israelites, after having taken a part of it by conquest, to have annexed it to the country assigned them, and thus have gratified their pride by swelling its original dimensions.

Nations, like individuals are ambitious of extending their possessions. Rulers who hold their offices by a permanent tenure, and who inherit their dominions from a long line of ancestry, and expect to transmit them to their heirs, and whose power resembles that which an individual exercises over his personal property, are in a situation in which strong temptations are presented to them to enlarge their territories. They have something like the feeling of private ownership in the country over which they bear rule; and the love of power, wealth and splendor urge them with a vehement impulse, to seize upon every opportunity to add to the resources and extent of their kingdoms. Not a small part of the wars, which have convulsed nations and ravaged the earth, has been of the nature of personal contests between rival potentates, originating from the lust of aggrandisement.

In republican nations like ours, one of the fruitful sources of war, that which arises from the personal ambition of rulers, has lost some part of its force.

The political magistrates holding their places only for a short period, being limited in their power, and having no hereditary, permanent, and as it were personal interest in their offices, possess not those strong inducements to engage in wars of conquest, that operate on the sovereigns of monarchial countries. Nevertheless, the peculiarities of their situation do not entirely shield them from the temptations which move so powerfuly the minds of those concerned in the administration of other forms of authority. They are also liable to be swayed by popular passion, to pursue those measures, which falling in with the prevalent inclinations and ambition of the nation which they govern, will be likely to secure acceptance with those upon whom they depend for re-election to the offices which they fill. For people, as well as rulers, are ambitious of national grandeur. The lust of conquest, a desire to extend the limits, power and resources of the country which they inhabit, will sometimes pervade all classes, and impel them to aggression and war upon those who have not the power of

successful resistance, and whose possessions they can appropriate to themselves.

The glory of a nation is thought to reflect honor on the meanest individual whom it embraces, and human vanity and pride are much gratified with the idea of being an inhabitant of a large, rich and prosperous country.

These observations are closely connected with a subject on which I propose to offer some observations—the Mexican war, a topic with which all are familiar, and upon which many perhaps may think that they have read, if not heard enough already, but in respect to which I have thought it not amiss to present my own views on this occasion.

There is two subjects suggested by this war, which will occupy the present discourse. One is that the policy, so much in favor with some, of greatly extending the territorial limits of this country is an unwise one; and the other, that it is the especial interest of republican nations like ours to avoid war. Let the real origin of this war be what it may, it is pretty evident *now*, that it is not the design of the government to bring it to a close, without acquiring a part of the acknowledged territory of Mexico and annexing it to the United States. This was intimated in an almost official manner in Congress, about the first of February, at the opening of the debate in the United States Senate on the three million bill, so called. The intimation was deemed a most important disclosure; for though the acquisition of foreign territory was by many suspected and charged upon the government as the ultimate object of the aggression upon Mexico, though the war had been in operation nearly nine months, and the President had devoted a large part of an unusually long message to an explanation of the causes which brought it about, some of the wisest men in the nation were in want of clearer light upon the subject. Mr. Calhoun, himself, in a speech made on the ninth of February, expressed the uncertainty under which his mind labored in relation to the policy of the President and his counsellors, and said that even then, the objects of the war were only a matter of inference. But when the President called for an appropiation af three millions, for the purpose of enabling him to make peace with Mexico, the chairman of the committee

of foreign relations in the senate, who from his position was supposed to be in pretty full possession of the views of the executive, made quite a distinct avowal of the existing purposes of the government, and by his statements confirmed the opinions of many that these purposes had given birth to the war.

The intelligence he said, which the President had received, gave reason to believe that upon a certain advance made to the Mexicans to enable them to pay the expenses of their army and other expenses, they would be willing to cede a portion of their territory. He said that the United States would of course expect indemnity in the shape of territory for the expenses of the war, to some extent, and also for the claims of the nation against Mexico; and though he was not authorized to state precisely what territory the government would demand, he supposed that no senator would think that he might get less than New Mexico and California, which were already in possession of the American arms.

The acquisition was at least to be of magnitude enough, to afford renumeration for the expenditure of the three millions—the payment of the unliquadated claims of Mexico, and such a part of the expenses of the war, as the government chose to make the Mexicans accountable for, to our treasury. The territory which the senator specified as that which he supposed would be the least that was necessary to satisfy the wishes of his associates, is of large extent, comprehending more than one third part of the whole Mexican country, extending from the thirty-second to the forty-second degree of north latitude, and reaching from the western boundaries of Texas to the shores of the Pacific ocean. Against so large an accession to the present domain of the United States there are several objections.

1. The extent of the United States is now amply sufficient. It comprehends an area of more than two million square miles. There are but three countries in the world whose surfaces are of larger dimensions than ours, Russia, China and Brazil. It is more than half as large as all the countries of Europe together. It is ten times as large as the kingdom of France, one of the most powerful nations of continental Europe. It is almost twenty times the size of Great Britain and Ireland, and approaches the magnitude of the whole British

empire, comprehending its vast possessions in North America, in Asia, in Africa, its Islands, Colonies and dependencies, which stretch all around the globe, and on which it is said the sun never sets. And it deserves to be considered, that while it holds such a proportion in area to this empire, its form and condition gives, us in many respects quite a preponderating advantage. The United States lie together in a continuous mass, separated by no seas or intervening countries, their affairs but little involved in the disturbing politics and changes of the old world, containing a people, with an unfortunate exception, having a common interest in the republic, assimilated and assimilating to each other in form, features, manners, tastes and social institutions. But the British empire is a disjointed and dissimilar mass, made up of parts, that are separated asunder by wide oceans, scattered about in the four quarters of the globe, peopled by distinct races having few affinities. Much the larger portion of the subjects of the British empire, as has been truly said, are pagans and semi-barbarians. Her possessions are so dispersed, her subjects so restless and unsubmissive, her affairs so complicated with those of other nations, that the resources of her vast army and navy are put in constant requisition over the whole world, to repel danger and hold the parts together. The sails of her war-ships are filled with every wind of heaven, and her deadly steel glitters in every sun that shines on the face of man. Almost at one and the same time, she despatches forces to put down rebellion in the Canadas, to overawe disaffection in Ireland, to repel a horde of savages in Africa, to batter down a fortress in Syria, to encounter the ferocious soldiery of Afghanistan and repair the wastes of a bloody battle in India.

She is like a giant, whose huge frame presents innumerable points of attack, furnished indeed with a hundred hands, armed with as many weapons, but which are obliged to be constantly in action, to parry hostile blows, and keep himself from being hewed to pieces.

The United States comprehend a large variety of latitude and climate. The southern extreme of Florida reaches almost to the tropical zone, and the northern limit of Oregon to the forty-eighth degree of north latitude. They unite the extremes of almost perpetual summer

in the south, with that of the cold of Franconia, where the thermometer is not long enough to measure the rigors of the temperature. They produce oranges and figs, and furs.

The Liverpool docks enclose some ships loaded with cotton, and others with ice, bearing the flag of the American Union.

If the United States were disjoined by an impassable wall from all the world beside, they can supply themselves with a pretty good variety of the most valuable articles of various latitudes.

We have two thousand miles of seacoast, with some of the finest harbors in the world. The Union occupies some of the richest and most eligible parts of North America, and is capable of maintaining a larger population than now exists in any country on earth.

Now what do we want of more territory? If we are ambitious to be a populous nation, the population is increasing with unsurpassed rapidity, and will soon expand to immense magnitude. If we wish to be rich, we possess a vast area of some of the most productive soil on the earth, with skill and industry that can turn even rocks and sands into fertile fields; and a commerce that sweeps every sea, and rivals that of the mistress of the ocean. The resources of the country are developing as if with magic power, and wealth is rolling in its floods beyond all example in the history of human progress.

If we are solicitous for ample power of defence against foreign enemies, no hostile force in North or South America could maintain with the Union a successful encounter. Its number, valor and resources, cause it to tower like a giant above all nations of the western continent. It is separated by a great distance, and a wide ocean from the access of the most powerful nations of the old hemisphere, and is able to protect itself from the attacks of any one of them, or any number of them that would be likely to combine for an act of aggression.

It is said in justification of the project to extend our boundaries, that we want room to expand ourselves; room doubtless for the increased population of distant future years. Who can pretend that we want it within any such near period, as need to occasion alarm to the most provident legislator? The idea would be absurd. The single state

of Missouri, if it were as fully and well cultivated as England, is capable of supporting the whole number of the people of the United States. The population of England is reckoned at three hundred and two to a square mile. If this country were as densely inhabited as that, our number would swell to the enormous sum of six hundred and four millions.

Perhaps there may be a larger proportion of uncultivable soil in the United States, than in England, but to balance this inequality, a large part of the land, possesses, naturally, vastly greater, productive energies, than that of the parent state, so that with an equally thorough and skillful agriculture, it can sustain at least, as great a number on the square mile as that country. We shall not be straitened for room at present. Supposing the population to double itself once in twenty-five years, which is probably the present rate of increase, it would require one hundred and twenty-five years to equalize the proportion of its numbers with that of the land of our origin; and when that period had elapsed, agriculture which is now advancing with wonderful rapidity, would have received such improvements, and the land have acquired such increasingly productive qualities, as to enable it to sustain an indefinite addition to the amount. There is no just reason to feel any anxiety about a redundancy of numbers for a century and a half to come at least.

Besides, if we want room to expand ourselves, will not Mexico need the same accomodations? What will she do with her increasing population, if we dismember her territory to enlarge our own? Again, where are we to stop? If we need New California as a provision for our growing number, shall we not want other additions to sustain a further increase? And penetrating through the isthmus of Darien and discovering those portions of the South Ameican states, whose sparseness of population would allow conveniences for emigrants, shall we not annex them also, and proceed to join one new region to another, till we have taken possession of half the other part of the continent? And, as no part of Mexico, and none of the countries of South America contain more than a fraction of what their capabilities permit, shall we not incorporate them all into our Union, as soon as they can be conquered? Why not provide for three hundred years,

as well as one hundred and fifty—for five hundred, as well as for one hundred—for a thousand, as well as for five hundred? And expanding our ideas with each new enlargement of our territorial limits, and extending the vision far down through distant ages, shall we not stretch our hand to the British and Russian possessions—to the West Indies and the islands of the Pacific, and every land that we dare to touch, and make one summary provision for all our unborn generations to the end of time?

In favor of the enlargement of the United States territory, some allege what they denominate our destiny, in the working out of which, they imagine that we are to proceed making one addition after another, till our banner waves over almost all North America. We must not suppose that the advocates of this doctrine, believe in the heathen notion of fate, or that a blind and unintelligent agency is pressing onward human affairs to their ultimate issues. Destiny must mean in the mouths of professedly christian men, something fixed by a divine decree, the result of an unalterable and eternal purpose of Jehovah. They must entertain the opinion, that it is a part of the great plan of Heaven, that the United States shall push its possessions from one limit to another, till it acknowledges no boundaries but the ocean. The doctrine of predestination then, it seems, makes a part of their political creed. I wonder if it is one of the articles of their religous faith also. But how do they know what the divine decree is with respect to the ultimate extent of the Union? The most rigid predestenarians in religion, do not pretend to be acqainted only with as much of the divine counsel as has been revealed. Does political predestinarianism assume to know more? I am not aware that this is pretended. Where then is the destiny of our country revealed? It is announced by no living prophet. It is not recorded on the pages of the Bible, nor written upon the earth, nor figured in the constellations of the skies.

It is a doctrine of ecclesiastical theology, that the divine purposes when known, are no justification of wrong doing. Does political theology teach a different sentiment? If in pursuance of the counsels of Heaven, our country shall finally become coextensive with this part of the continent, will it sanctify aggression—will it excuse plunder—

will it wipe out the stains of guilty blood-shedding—will it justify injustice, and change iniquity into righteousness? There is a destiny of this, and all republics, as certain as the history of God's providence and the nature of man can make it, which is, that they shall stand or fall by their moral conduct. If injustice, aggression and a disposition to trample on human rights, shall become the permanent and collective character of our government and people, there is no doubt about our destiny, we shall fall as fell Carthage and Rome, and the other degenerate republics of antiquity. We shall perish in our own corruption, and be swept away by Him who sits on the Throne of Eternal Justice, and administers the cup of retribution to the guilty nations.

2. Any considerable addition to our territory will increase the toils and difficulties of the government, and multiply the evils which embarrass the nation. The larger the country, the more numerous and complicated will be its interests, the greater the amount of civil business to be performed, the more varied and perplexing are the cares and responsibilities, and the greater the wisdom, fidelity and required energy, of those who administer its civil concerns. It is possible for a country to be of such magnitude as to over-burden the government, and impose on them a task, which they cannot well sustain. Amid such overwhelming cares and labors as may devolve upon the supreme authority some duties are neglected, others half performed, many interests which demand attention, and are most vitally connected with the prosperity of the people and the legitimate objects of magistracy, must suffer neglect and languish, which in a territory of smaller dimensions, will be regarded and fostered.

Our country is large enough now to impose a heavy task on the government. Our sessions of Congress when not limited by constitutional provisions, stretch over eight or nine months of the year, and even then, a mass of the business is left unfinished, and other parts of it receive an attention, hasty and superficial compared with its claims.

I presume, that if the late session had not been terminated by a fixed limitation, it would have continued the next summer, and then that the Congress would have adjourned under the compulsion of fatigue and exhaustion, with a considerable amount of unperformed bus-

iness on their hands. What has the legislature done during the past season but discuss the affairs of the Mexican war? The theatre of contest has been transferred from the Rio Grande to the Capitol at Washington. There has been as much contending about the Mexicans in the halls of legislation, as there has been with them in their own country; and the several political parties have fought as hard to overcome each other in the chamber of debate, as the army of occupation has, to capture Santa Anna. Almost all legislation about other objects has been suspended, and great interests which solicited the attention of the rulers have been neglected, and lie over to press on some future overburdened sessions of Congress, and protract them nearly through the year.

It is true, that we are not ordinarily to expect a foreign war to absorb with its mighty and urgent concerns, the time and interests of the national councils, and crowd other important subjects out of place. But there is almost always some one, or more, prominent and agitating questions before the public mind, difficult enough in themselves to dispose of with justice to all parties, rendered more perplexing by the intense and conflicting feelings which it excites, and other great topics which its decision may affect, upon which debate runs high and long, and month after month is consumed, while the country is suffering not only from the delay of their adjustment, but from want of attention to other measures which are loudly demanding legislation.

As the population of the country increases, and the resources and concerns become enlarged, the pressure on the government will be still more weighty, and the task imposed on them proportionably perplexing and severe. Why should the pressure be increased without necessity? Why should their cares and labors be multiplied which are too great to be sustained now, and when no just views of policy demand their augmentation? It may be said that there should be an increase of the number of government officers to meet the growing demands of the civil concerns of the country. And so there might, and must be in some of its political departments. But there can be but one President, and if he had the whole continent of America for the subject of his administration, upon his single mind must devolve all the weight of Presidential cares and responsibilities,

and in his own person, must he execute the peculiar functions of his office, just as though he was but the chief magistrate of a republic no larger than Massachusetts.

There can be but one Congress to perform all its legislation; and though its members might be multiplied a hundred fold, they would not make greater progress in public business than with the present number. Indeed, there would be so much more speaking, and partisanship, and variety of opinions, and so many more cross currents in such a large assembly, that the necessary and useful labors devolving upon them, would not be so well executed as they are now. Legislative bodies may be too large. The evil is, among us, anticipated and guarded against. So that from time to time the number of people required to elect a representative to the lower house of Congress is augmented, and as the population advances, Congressional Districts will increase from eighty thousand to a hundred and fifty thousand, and from that to three hundred thousand and onward, and thus to avoid the evil of an overwhelming legislative assembly in the Capitol, the time may come, when even so many inhabitants as are now contained in the whole state of Massachusetts might not be sufficient to elect as representatives, to the popular branch of the National Councils.

If the country were as well peopled as England, and the Congressional Districts no larger than at present, we should have a house of representatives consisting of nearly seven thousand. When would such a body finish speech-making? There is such a propensity to this habit, that the members are limited to an hour now. The towering flight of many an orator is suddenly checked and brought low, and as he is borne upon the current of his periods, he suddenly strikes upon an insignificant monosylable, and his eloquence is cruelly dashed to pieces. On some questions there is such an eagerness to speak, that there is a perfect scramble for the floor, and he is a fortunate man who gets liberty to give vent to the inspiration which glows within.

The house is certainly quite large enough with its present numbers for an expeditious despatch of the public business. But if the country was proportionably populous as England, the number of constituents

for each representative, would require to be enlarged to more than two millions and a half.

Now the object of representation is of course to represent—to express the views, feelings and interests of the constituency. The reason why those chosen for this purpose must reside in the vicinity of the electors, is, that each portion of the country might have its claims duly presented and understood, amidst the congregated wisdom of the nation. The representatives are required to be inhabitants of the District for which they are elected, so that they might have those common sympathies, and that acquaintance with the circumstances and interests of those who depute them to act in their behalf, that nearness of location may give.

The members of the House of Commons in England may be chosen by the boroughs and counties from any part of the kingdom. A man who resides in London may be elected by the city of Edinburgh. An inhabitant of Scotland may be appointed to represent a town in Ireland. This is thought by us to be a bad arrangement. Supposing an individual in Maine should be delegated to represent a District in Alabama or Mississippi. Could he sympathise with the sentiments, and know the condition and wants of his constituents as well as the inhabitants of either of those places? So the smaller the district for which he acts, the better acquaintance will a delegate have of its position, concerns and necessities. But the wider the extent of the country, the larger must be the number of people assigned to the congressional sections, to avoid the evil of an overgrown and cumbrous body of legislators; and of consequence the less able will individuals selected to represent them be, to transmit the views and wishes of those different portions of the country to the National Government.

This is a strong reason against increasing the extent of the country when no urgent considerations demand it. The interests of its various parts will in many important respects, be less faithfully expressed in the action of the general administration.

Again, the country will be exposed to a greater number of intrigues and disturbing agitations of ambitious men, and to the evils of more numerous sectional divisions and party strifes, in proportion to the extent of its area. There are a thousand times more now, who

aspire to the high political places of the nation, than can obtain them. There can be, as has been said, but one President, but there are hundreds who aspire to his office. And the members of Congress must be limited far, within the number of those who are anxious to obtain seats in its chambers, and will be becoming continually fewer, proportionably to the populousness of the nation. The more extensive the country, the more will the aspirants for the high offices of the nation be multiplied; and the larger the Congressional Districts, the greater the number who will be excluded from the political elevations which they are solicitous to reach. Now, ambitious, unprincipled men, who are disappointed in their aims for civil distinction, are the pests of the Republic. Fired with lofty views,—exasperated by competition—rankling with envy towards those who have out-stripped them in the career of advancement, and determined to win success at all hazards and consequences, they will intrigue, agitate, raise oppression, get up new parties for frivolous and nefarious reasons, and sacrifice principle, patriotism and all public interests, on the altar of personal aggrandizement. It is desirable that we should have as few such disappointed men as possible. It is thought by some that the independent state governments, presenting so many opportunities for certain grades of political elevation, in the numerous offices which they supply, are a kind of safety-valve, to let off the superabundant steam of ambition, which would otherwise act with tremendous force, on the national machinery, and explode it to fragments. There is, no doubt, truth in the opinion; and happy for us is it, that our system of government is so constructed, as to counteract in such a measure, the evils to which our society is exposed, from the all-prevalent and ungovernable thirst for political eminence.

If ours were a central government, and the states mere provinces of a large country, ruled by lieutenants or deputies, instead of the present organizations, and the people possessed the intelligence, ardor and energy which signalize them now, the ambition of numerous men which is now pacified by state offices, would aim higher, and produce a degree of tumult, and competition, and strife, that would greatly mar our happiness and endanger our safety. But the nature and operation of the remedy, reveal the malignity of the disease,

which is but partially checked, and needs all the salutary precaution which our wisdom can devise, and our situation permits to be taken.

Further, the greater the magnitude of our territory, the more numerous its sectional interests, and consequent party divisions. It is just with a large country, as it is with a large town or school district. One part of the inhabitants will live on a hill, and another in a valley. A portion will be situated on this side of a brook, another on that. Some of the families will reside in a corner and some in the centre. And there is a hill party, and a valley party, and the north side of the brook party, and the south side party, and the centre party, and the corner party, which setting up some real or imaginary interest within their respective limits, will growl defiance across the lines, as if they were so many hostile entrenchments, whose duty it was to war with each other. And there are conflicting opinions and animosities, and jealousies, and feuds, which will keep the communities in agitation, and interfere with the adoption of those wise measures which are requisite for the general interests.

This country is of such great extent, and embraces such a variety of those influences which affects character, that there is occasion for no little dissimilarity in the sentiment and passions of the different sections. Climate, of which there is such a diversity, affects the physical organization of man, which in its turn, gives its own complexion to the mental habits and feelings. The local condition and pursuits of life, which have such an influence in determining the modes of thought and controlling prejudices, are multiform in their nature, and produce their appropriate effects on society.

The great distance which intervenes between those who occupy the extreme parts of the confederacy, impairs the force of that feeling which more or less unite inhabitants of the same country together, and by estranging them from each other, gives rise to a diversity of opinions and preferences which might be blended into harmony by vicinity of location. Why should the distance in any direction be increased? Why should we add new weaknesses to those sympathies that now draw us with too feeble an attraction? Why should new occasion of diversity and alienation, and division be added to those sources of discordant strife which perplex the counsels of the govern-

ment, alarm the fears of the patriot, and threaten the safety of the nation ?

To these remarks it may be replied, that when there is a great number of distinct interests and political combinations in a state, they present a bulwark against the predominance of any one whose designs may be hostile to liberty and public welfare; and that their very multiplicity is a safeguard to the country, by the counteraction which they exert against each other. The justice of this remark, within certain limits, cannot be denied. But have we not now room and occasion enough for all that variety which the safety of the Commonwealth demands? Would not an increase of its amount become a source of peril, by occasioning great delay in the public business, by producing sudden and disastrous changes in the national policy, and crushing great measures of indispensable utility to the country?

3. It is a well settled opinion that the stability and permanency of our free institutions rest on the intelligence, virtue, and strength of religious sentiment in the country. Some portions of our union, particularly New England, possess those elements and guarantees of republican liberty in an extensive and encouraging degree. They are great models for the new and forming states, whose success and prosperity depend on the approach which they make to their illustrious examples. But the recently formed and forming states, to say nothing of some others of older date, are in a condition to awaken the patriotic concern of every man who wishes well to the republic, and hopes for the success of the great experiment of North American liberty. It is a point clearly understood and admitted by every intelligent man, decided with him beyond all question, that unless that portion of the country which comprehends more than half the area, which is the most fertile in resources, and destined to become the most populous, wealthy and powerful section of the whole, is not vastly better supplied with the sources of moral and intellectual culture, than the present means furnish, a disastrous fate awaits it. Free institutions cannot be maintained in it; and as the physical power will reside in that district, and as the rest of us are united with them under a common government, how hardly shall we escape a common ruin. When that fall takes place, it will shake New England and the Atlantic states as if an

earthquake had unsettled the foundation of all their hills and mountains, if it does not overwhelm them in the same catastrophe. We do indeed hope for a better fate for all. We hope that the deep impression of alarm which the danger has created, the mighty interest that has beenawakened, that the vast ocean tide of patriotic and christian feeling which is rolling in upon those arid lands, that the great mustering of the forces of American liberty on those western battle-fields, where the last contest is to be fought, and the last victory won or lost, will leave the banners of intelligent christians, happy republicanism floating and triumphant along the whole length of the Mississipi. But cannot every reflecting personse e that we shall have enough to do to win the field? There is another revolutionary war to be fought; a war not against steel and military array, but a war against ignorance, irreligion, Romanism and the most formidable foes that ever assailed freedom. Two or three states have been, or are about to be added to the union, in which are Bunker-hills, wanting to become fields of combat for liberty, extending from one limit to another. Europe is emptying her cities and villages on the broad plains of the west, as the clouds pour out rain.

A little while since, Texas came into the Union with her hundred thousand square miles of territory on the south west. Oregon on the west having had her boundary ascertained, and become a well defined portion of our possessions, presents an inviting field for emigration. And now the republic stands with one foot on the shores of the Atlantic, and another on the Pacific, and stretches her arms over thirteen hundred miles from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico.

It is almost discouraging to contemplate the mighty work which we have to do, to save these United States to liberty. And New England, as she always has done, is to take the heaviest part of the work on her hands, and Massachusetts to sustain the weightier part of New England's burden. The christian looks on the great west, and asks with a sigh how shall we save the country and fulfil the pious wishes of our fathers ? The patriot glances at the mighty surface which is peopling beyond all precedent in history, and demands what influence shall perpetuate our freedom. The man who is solicited year after year for increasing contributions to help build up the institutions

of learning, and religion in the new settlements, is almost wearied with the importunity, and asks when will it cease? And yet as if the present reasons for alarm and complaint were not aggravated enough we are now contemplating the accession of a new territory nearly six times as large as Texas. The region embracing New Mexico and California covers a surface of five hundred and fifteen thousand square miles. It is almost nine times as large as New England. It is nearly half as large again as all the thirteen states which united in the Declaration of Independence in 1775.

New California has a fertile soil, and its latitude extends from the parallel of Savannah in Georgia, to that of Boston. It is said to be extremely productive of all kinds of grain, admitting of two crops in a season. Gold and silver mines, and copper of unlimited quantity, exist in the country. For its maratime advantages, it is said not to have its equal on the whole western coast of America. The principal ports, San Francisco and San Diego, are reputed to be some of the finest on the northern part of the continent. No wonder that the territory is coveted.

But what can we do with it if we acquire it? The population, though small for the territory, is about sixty thousand, almost all catholics in their religion probably ; unassimilated in their opinions, tastes and habits, to the spirit of our institutions, and quite unfit to be citizens of our republic. But no sooner is it annexed to our country, than the stream of emigration will set in upon it from the states, and from foreign countries, and pour itself like a deluge all over the land; and then for the sixty thousand original papists, with all the additions of Romanists from Europe, and for Protestants who have outrun the institutions of religion and popular information, the cry will be wafted, the cry that has so long been borne across the Alleghanies, give us the gospel, send us teachers; the Papists are flooding us with priests, and building their cathedrals, and establishing their nunneries. Thousands are growing up in ignorance and irreligion; our institutions are in danger. And if the piety and patriotism of the Northern and Atlantic states are not on the alert, and ready to be taxed to the utmost, then another cloud black with wrath and foreboding, will throw itself up from the horizon to add new and perilous gloom to the masses

that frown the western sky. Truly, we shall have enough on our hands, if things go on as they have begun. In eighteen hundred and forty-one Yucatan, a province of Mexico, on the southern edge of the gulf, directly opposite New Orleans, set up for Independence. A month or two ago, commissioners arrived from that place to Washington, to treat with our government. Perhaps there will be a project on foot for annexing that region soon. The inhabitants may want our troops to defend them from Santa Anna, if he ever gets safely released from his engagements with Taylor; and then the Yankees will take their pay in forests of logwood on the bay of Campeachy. What a mercy it is that we have the Atlantic on the east, and the Pacific on the west, for if these oceans were land, it would not be long before a scheme would be devised for annexing all mankind to the United States.

If Captain Parry had found his way to the North Pole, that possibly might have been already annexed, so that our ships might have a profitable speculation in transporting ice, after it had been divested of its salt, to Calcutta. And it would certainly be less dangerous to acquire an accession of ice, than of productive soil. If California is added to the United States, it would be vastly better and safer for us, as far as human eye can see, that its fine soil should be converted into a plain of ice, four thousand miles thick, than that by its mild climate and productive energies, and rich mines, it should rear up a vast catholic, ignorant, vicious population, to threaten mischief to our free institutions.

4. It is a fixed design of many of the southern politicians to convert the contemplated accession, or at least a considerable portion of it into slave territory. The acquisition of a part of Mexico for the purpose of extending slave-holding, is thought, and not without many plausible reasons, to have been the moving spring of the war. However that may be, it is sufficiently plain, that the design is to convert whatever accession is made, to this nefarious purpose.

When, during the winter, the three million appropiation was called for in Congress, as it was supposed to be one part of the design to make use of it in the purchase of new territory, a proviso was attached to the bill, the purport of which was, that sla-

very should be forever excluded from any new lands that might be acquired. It passed in the House of Representatives by a pretty good majority. Its fate was thought doubtful in the Senate. After a thorough debate there, the appropiation was agreed to, and the proviso rejected. The bill then went back to the House, when to the reproach of that body, the former vote was changed, and the bill accepted as it was returned. It was not so strange that the slave-holders should pursue such a policy as they did, however inexpedient and depraved it may be; but that northern men, who profess to regard, and do regard slaveholding as an abominable system of oppression and mischief, should be willing to take the risk of such deplorable consequences as were so likely to follow from the votes which they gave, shows to what prodigious lengths of folly and inconsistency men will sometimes proceed to carry out a favorite system of policy. If the non-slaveholding states would be true to their duty and country, a death blow might be given to the further extension of slavery in this country. The abettors of the atrocious system, are not strong enough to effect their measures without adventitious aid. Most, perhaps all of those from the free states who voted against the proviso, are doubtless sincerely, deeply opposed to slavery, but they wanted Esau's land. And they would, must have it at the hazard of all consequences. California must be acquired, though its fine soil should be cut up into plantations of slaveholders. The cry was for land, though it should be wet with the tears, and its breezes should be loaded with the sighs of bondage; and one of the heaviest curses that ever afflicted man, or provoked heaven, should spread "blasting and mildew" from one limit to another.

The advocates of slavery contend, that the territories of the United States are common property, and that it is a violation of southern rights and the constitution, not to allow the slaveholder to emigrate with his servants into the new territories, with the exception of those with regard to which there may be some express or tacit agreement to the contrary, as well as the person who owns any other description of property. But the question is, whether the property is rightly held? If not, then it resolves itself into this, whether the government shall confer the liberty to commit a grievous political wrong?

Whether it shall grant a man a right to violate right? The slave master contends that he has a right to hold his fellow beings in bondage in the new lands, and the person so held, claims the right to be set at liberty, and to become his own master; and Congress is called upon to arbitrate between them. Now with any well constituted and unprejudiced mind, the question does not admit of a moment's hesitation. The government has a right to say, that while we will not intefere with your wrong doing in the present slave states, because it is against the constitutional compact, we do not admit that this compact extends to the new territories; and if you are found in the possession of a horse or a man, to which you cannot show a valid title, the true owner shall have his property restored to him. There can be no reasonable objection to such a decision.

It is alleged also, that if new states apply for admission into the Union, with a republican constitution of government, the Congress has no right to enquire whether slavery is allowed in them or not. Just as if a form of government, the principles of which permitted one man to hold another in domestic servitude, were strictly republican, a constitution may be ever so excellent in many respects, but so far as it allows of slavery, it has an anti-republican element. This feature is no more republican, than the despotism of Turkey. The Congress has a right to demamd of every state that sues for admission into the Union, that its form of government be republican in all respects, or at least that there shall be no very gross departures from such a model. But slavery is such a departure. The constitution of the United States, in those provisions which lend a sanction to African servitude, presents an exception to the general principles on which it is founded. It is to some extent a compromise, and was understood to be such at the time it was framed. Now the whole spirit of American freedom, the express objects for which Independence was declared, the general principles of the constitution itself, forbid that the compromise should be extended at all beyond its original design.

We are told, however, of the conservative influence which slavery exerts on our political institutions; it is held forth as a remedial agent in our system, for disorders that admit of no other cure. It has even been denominated the corner stone of American freedom. The idea

seems to be, that as the laboring portion in every community, must form a large, ignorant, degraded, vicious populace, disqualified to properly exercise the rights of citizenship, whose passions are inflammable, and whose vast physical force may be wielded by demagogues with terrible effect against the state, it is better that they should be deprived of all political rights, and converted into slaves, to destroy their power of doing mischief. And so if the African race in any instance should not happen to furnish a supply for the purpose, the principle would demand that one portion of the whites should be subjected to the other. Now this is giving up republicanism; it is a confession of the utter impracticability of free institutions; it is surrendering the great doctrines of our revolutionary contest, and going back to the days of vassalage and barbarianism. If our free system cannot be sustained except on the basis of slavery, then it is not worthy of the name; it is an outrage on all propriety to call it republican, and it could be as truly denominated a despotism as any which ever trod human necks into the dust. But there is no necessity for the ignorance and degradation of the laboring classes. If proper means are used to extend popular information, and the influences of christianity, the great moral disease under which so many countries have labored may be healed; the masses can be elevated; the populace may become the people, and like those trained in the New England schools, and swayed by the influences of the New England pulpit, they may form the choicest materials for a republican edifice, the strength and foundation of revolutionary and puritan liberty. Setting aside all considerations of republicanism and the rights of humanity, it is wonderful that a man of Mr. Calhoun's acute and vigorous mind, and extensive reading and observation, should not see the disastrous influence of slavery in an economical point of view. His own state of South Carolina feels the poison of the institution working at the vitals of her prosperity. In a letter, dated the 2d of March last, from Tennessee, it is said that population and the price of land are declining all over the state, a great number of plantations are worn out and abandoned. The proportion of exhausted land is increasing every year. The people are so poor, that that the western drovers are obliged to sell extremely low to find any market at all. Over one hundred and fifty thousand

emigrants passed through Tennessee from North and South Carolina, between the harvest and March; and it was said that emigration would continue through all the spring. Mr. Calhoun seems to think that if the poor creatures are so lost to a sense of their own happiness as to run away from the paradise of slavery, it is his duty to send the paradise after them. If they will not stay in the garden of Eden where it is, he will carry it where they go ; he wishes to bless California, if we acquire it, and cause that wilderness to rejoice, and make it bud and blossom like the worn out plantations of South Carolina. We are referred to the amount of staple productions we owe to slave labor, as a reason for its continuance. Just as though free labor could not cultivate them as well. If the slaveholders do not know that the energies of freemen are many times as productive as those of slaves, they have yet to learn what are the first principles not only of humanity and justice, but of agriculture and economy.

Shall we have four or five hundred thousand square miles of slave territory added to this Union? Shall we convert this large and fertile tract into a house of bondage for the poor African? Shall we curse the soil, and taint the air, and poison the springs of its comfort and prosperity, and destroy all its life, and then fasten it like a putrid and festering corpse to this living republic, to infuse its venom into the lungs, and arteries of the whole political system ? God forbid that such an act of folly should disgrace the intelligence of the age; that such a deed should stain the pages of American freedom ; God forbid that justice and right should so be trampled down in this nineteenth century of christianity.

If the contemplated plan should be carried out, and slave-holding should gain a great addition of extent and power, it would be fraught with mischief of the most formidable character. No human mind can penetrate through the thick darkness that would envelope the prospect before us; and we could only cast ourselves in humble trust on the care of Him, who, sitting at the helm of affairs, has hitherto guided the destiny of our country, and who is able to direct the most perplexed and gloomy affairs of the nation to safe and prosperous issues.

But our duty is plain. It is for all non-slaveholding states, with-

out respect to party, to unite in one strong and unflinching column against the consummation of so disastrous a measure, to hem in the mischief that is pressing on the commonwealth on all sides, as with a wall of adamant, that will reach up to heaven. I would treat it as scorpions are sometimes treated, when a great circular fire is kindled around the venomous reptile, which waxing warmer and warmer, compels it to turn in every direction for escape, and at length to thrust, in despair, its sting into its own vitals.

If we consent to such a nefarious measure as this, then let the name and history of Plymouth be blotted from American annals; let all the Puritan blood within us burst from our veins; let the great struggle of this country for freedom escape from the memory of man; let us take the constitution of our government and the bills of rights of every state, and kindling them into a flame, present them as a burnt offering on the altar of injustice and oppression.

Another topic of this discourse is that war is a dangerous employment for republics.

1. It is peculiarly so with unjustifiable war. No republic can stand, as has already been intimated, that is not founded on the great principles of justice and a regard to human rights. Virtue and religion are the only safeguards of liberty. An unjust war, as has been said, is the greatest of all atrocities. It is a whole nation engaged in the murder of hundreds and thousands of innocent persons. When wars are waged by monarchical countries, it is often an affair of the governments, which the great mass of the people have no agency in bringing about. In republican governments like ours, the people are the sovereigns. The officers of the government are the representatives of the popular will, the agents to execute the mandates of those who raise them to power. When, therefore, you see such countries engaged in unjust wars, you witness an exhibition of national injustice, and will see one of the saddest omens of the decline of the republic which its condition can present. It is true that the rulers may sometimes pursue measures for which the people are not responsible, and that are contrary to the general will. But these measures will soon be arrested, for the feelings of an outraged people will embody themselves in utterance and go up to the high places of power

in tones so loud and emphatic, as to cause their occupants well to understand that the only alternatives are, an abandonment of their course or a loss of their stations. But usually, the public councils are directed by the expressed or understood inclinations of the majority of the community. And when this community is inflamed by ambition and the lust of plunder, and urges the rulers on to aggressive war on neighboring countries, it evinces such a profligacy of sentiment, as must fill the heart of every virtuous man with anxiety for the consequences. If men will make an unjust attack on foreign dominions, invading the rights and destroying the lives of the people, they will, when occasion presents, turn their hostilities on each other; and the liberties of the people will be trampled down by the strongest and most successful faction.

The present war with Mexico is thought by a large number of the people, and by some of all political parties, to be unnecessary and unjust. It is the opinion of some of the most eminent and well informed of the country, who take opposite views generally on the great civil questions which divide the people, that without any compromise of honor, without any loss of territory to which we have a just claim, without any sacrafice of property and right, this contest might have been avoided by wise counsels and forbearance on the part of those who guide the measures of the state; and thus all that dreadful waste of life and treasure, which the war has occasioned, might have been saved to both the contending nations. Without meaning to introduce any mere political topics into the pulpit, or to speak as a member of any party, I am constrained to say, that from the developements which have been made, and the discussions that have been held, it is pretty evident that these opinions are founded on strong reasons, and make it clear, that if prudence, a spirit of conciliation, a just sense of the evils of bloody strife, and a contentment with the present limits of our possessions had presided in the hearts of rulers and people, we might have continued at peace, and all the questions in dispute between the United States and Mexico have been in the course of honorable and just settlement. It is no place here to enter minutely into the considerations which relate to the questions between the two countries. But I may say, it seems to have been successfully established,

that the American forces were ordered to march into territories that never made a part of Texas, and which had always been under the control of Mexican authority, and that too, notwithstanding what may have been said to the contrary, when there was no probability that the Mexicans intended to invade our soil, or to molest us in any degree whatever. As to the wrongs which they had inflicted on our citizens and which are acknowledged to be great,—though they had influences on the measures and feelings which have resulted in the warfare—it is not pretended that they made a part of the *immediate* occasion of it. The war, therefore, is a war of invasion on the rights and territories of a neighboring republic, and this nation is committed to the greatest wrong which human beings can inflict on each other; their hands are stained with the blood of thousands who have fell in deadly strife, besides that of all who have perished in the pestilence of foreign regions, and have sunk exhausted under the fatigues of a military life. And in the infliction of this wrong, the moral sense of the nation exhibits a fearful degree of perversion. That religious sense of right and responsibility, without which all other safeguards are inefficient, has at once revealed its want of strength and has become impaired; injustice, which inflicts as much injury on ourselves as on the nation against whom it is committed, has triumphed. There has been a wide departure from the only path of our country's safety; the great pillars of our freedom are shaken. We hope there is enough of the conservative elements of justice, religion and the fear of God to effect a strong counteraction, and to arrest the progress of corrupt principle; that the present is only a partial disorder which there is vigorous vitality enough to check and expel from the system. For if not, if the career now commenced should go forward without hindrance, if the restraints of morality are to be cast off, if the thirst for plunder and love of violence, and contempt of obligation, should direct the sentiments of the nation, and impel them to aggression on other communities, then will seeds of fatal mischief be sown in our soil, and we shall reap the bitter harvest which our infatuation has sown; and that noble edifice whose foundation was laid in piety and baptised in blood, and has been favored by the kindest benignity of heaven will fall in pieces.

2. Wars of republics tend greatly to disturb the balance of the

government. They give undue prominence to the executive branch of authority. I think it has been remarked that when the frame of our government was established, the constitution of the executive, of the Presidency was among the most difficult parts of the work. The medium between giving the chief magistrate too much, and too little power, required great wisdom to find. But of one thing there was not then, and there is no question now "that it is of the nature of war to increase the executive at the expense of the legislative authority." This very remark was made by Mr. Hamilton, when the constitution was before the people for acceptance; he is speaking however of the effect of continued war to compel the legislature to clothe the executive with additional powers, but it is true in other aspects. The prosecution of war, the operations of which often require such quick despatch, such promptitude and energy in the supreme command, cannot be trusted to the direction of deliberative assemblies. They would debate when they should act, and the most critical and decisive momemt would pass away, amidst the conflict of those who could unite in no decision.

The President of the United States is commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy. These two mighty arms of the nation, he can wield with absolute authority; he can send them to any part of the country, or the world whither he pleases they should go. War increases the army, or rather in this country may be said to create it; and if it does not add to the navy, yet it puts the armed ships in order for battle. Now suppose an extreme case; that is, of an army of one hundred, or two hundred thousand men under skilful officers, trained to war, having all the habits and tastes of a disciplined soldery, long detached from civil life and sympathy with the people, to be in the field. Suppose the President to be a man of great military capacity, of ambitious views, and that he place himself at the head of this formidable army. Suppose there exists a navy of thirty or forty ships of the line, with the usual accompaniment of lesser armed vessels, to operate in conjunction with this land force, wielded by the same executive arm. Suppose a succession of splendid victories to have awakened the highest degree of popular enthusiasm in favor of the army with its leaders, and that both that and the navy were most

idolatrously devoted to the supreme commander, and prepared to execute any designs which he should form to promote his own aggrandisement. If such a man was disposed to break down our constitution, and trample on our liberties, and erect himself a throne at Washington, who would not tremble for the consequences to the republic? It is the American and English policy to control the executive and his army, by making them dependent on the legislature for supplies; but our congress itself might be dazzled and blinded by the lustre of military glory, which was reflected from the army, and the young men of the former body, fired with the ambition of military reputation and the hopes of appointment to office in the ranks, might yield themselves to the dictation of the imperious chief, and lay everything he asked at his feet. But at any rate, the army must be supplied with means for some months in advance, to enable it to form its plans and conduct its movements with any tolerable degree of foresight, vigor and success. Three months supply would give a commander, like Cromwell or Bonaparte immense advantage. Besides, suppose he should equip himself with the captured resources of the enemy, or make a combined attack with the military and naval armament on such a city as New York, and open the vaults of the banks and other deposits of money, and levy an assessment on the rich, and thus take by the sword and cannon what the congress refused to grant him.

I have supposed as I have said a very extreme case, but it illustrates my principle, and all cases in which the principle is involved, make a greater or less approach to such an extreme, and to its fearful consequences. We are jealous in this country of standing armies, for all history allows what powerful engines they have been for crushing liberty. They would be dangerous, if of any size, by whatsoever power controlled. But they would be peculiarly dangerous, if under the sole command of the executive. Hence the President has not only no power to *raise* armies, but not even to *command* the *militia*, except when called into the actual service of the United States in the way the congress directs. The framers of our constitution had read history, and gave heed to the solemn warnings which rung in their ears from every country of the old world, and from every age of antiqui-

ty. But every war gives the President a standing army during its continuance. It puts the mighty power of twenty, thirty, or forty thousand men into his hands to move when he says march; to stop when he cries halt; to pour out a tempest of shot when he points the finger; and to be controlled by his voice as the winds lift up the surges of the ocean. Such a force though small for the extent of our country, and compared with the immense number which could be brought to resist it, if it aimed to accomplish any nefarious purpose, yet, guided by an executive, possessed of the resources and energy of some military chieftains, and covered with the glory of brilliant successes which he had obtained in the field, and increasing his number by bands of adventurers that might be induced to rally around his standard, it might prove a most dangerous and terrible foe to our Institutions.

It is true, that men of capacity for war, like those to whom I have alluded, are rare, as all other persons of brilliant talent; and the condition of our country does not favor the success of those who would rise by military adventure, and by turning their traitorous arms against their own government; and a war of short continuance, in which a large part of the force consists of volunteers who serve for brief terms, and then retire to civil life, under direction of a President of no military pretensions, and who confines himself at home to the political duties of his office, may not be supposed to give any great and perilous predominance to the executive.

But every war has this *tendency*. It furnishes the President with a power which under various pretences, and for various reasons he has peculiar opportunities for abusing. One abuse and unwarranted stretch of authority prepare the way for others. War being directed against an enemy to whom it is the object to do injury, and dealing in violence and blood, throws a veil of palliation over excesses and unjustifiable assumption of power; and one or two brilliant triumphs will cast such a glare upon crime, as to hide its deformity from public observation.

A single war also tends to produce a *state* of war. One contest often grows out of another. One war renders a succeeding one more probable. The people become familiarized to the shock of arms, and the spil-

ling of human blood; disbanded soldiers thirst for new and stirring adventures; retired officers burn with ardent desire to plunge into contest, and gather new laurels on the field of blood; and thus there is a tending to perpetuate that condition of war, in which, according to Mr. Hamilton, it becomes necessary to clothe the executive with disproportionate power, and to give it a preponderance in the government, which will afford it a great temptation and opportunity to absorb all power into itself, and erect itself a colossal throne upon the ruins of the co-ordinate branches of government, and the prostrate liberties of the people.

We have great reason to hope that things will never proceed to such a deplorable extremity in this hitherto fortunate land; that notwithstanding the unpropitious indications which exhibit themselves in our public affairs, there is so much of an intelligent appreciation of the value and necessary securities of our freedom; such a tendency to industrial enterprise and the arts of peace; such a degree of the spirit of humanity, and sense of religious obligation in the public sentiment of the people, as to arrest the progress of all those mischiefs that threaten disaster to the nation. But should not the jealousy of a free spirit be constantly awake? Should not every avenue to danger be closed up, and should not we all be posted like sentinels on the watchtowers of the republic to detect every insidious foe, and eager to repel him from our borders? Our policy is peace; peace for the balance of government, which war unsettles, peace for freedom, which war endangers; peace as far as possible; peace to the last limits of forbearance; peace with Mexico on the south-west; with Russia on the north-west; with Great Britain on the north and east; peace with Europe, Asia, Africa, and South America to all generations.

3. I have already anticipated some remarks which were intended to be made under the third topic, which is, that war tends to excite an undue degree of the military spirit in the community. In some countries the military ardor has been cultivated as the most essential part of the sentiment of the nation. As much effort has been made to kindle the passion for war, and inspire the profoundest respect for the profession of arms, as though they were the noblest pursuits of

human life The uniform of the soldier has been the badge of honor. The pomp of military array has intoxicated the senses, and waked up an enthusiastic emotion that has rendered the common employments of life insipid, and men have rushed into the glittering ranks and "tented field," as though nothing else were worthy the aspiration of our honorable ambition. All this is in accordance with the condition of those nations which are bent on war, whose monuments of glory are inscribed with the records of victorious battles, who settle all difficulties with the sword, and where government itself is obliged to surround itself with instruments of death, to protect itself from the people whom it oppresses. But the predominance of a military spirit in a republic, is the bane of its liberties, it is a fire which if not checked, will consume them to stubble.

The military spirit tends to produce an imperious, tyrannical spirit. The command of the officer is the most arbitrary of all edicts. It consigns whole ranks to instant death, and admits of no question nor appeal. It is, of course, apt to beget a slavish spirit. The soldier knows no law but the will of his superior, and is trained to move at his bidding, just as a machine is propelled by the power that gives it operation. It is liable to engender a cruel and blood-thirsty spirit, burning with hate, and delighting in carnage. I do not go so far as to believe that all war is unnecessary and unjust, on the part of both the forces who meet in contest, and therefore must believe that a military genius and propensity may be so combined with moral principle, and subject to control, as to produce none of those bitter fruits. But how rarely is this the case ; and when the martial ardor seizes on a whole nation, and becomes the predominant sentiment, and impels it to seek occasions to gratify itself in the bloody field, its depravity cannot be denied, and it operates most adversely to the spirit of republicanism, from the characteristics already mentioned. It is opposed to every thing which promotes the true interests of a republic. The spirit of industry, economy, commercial enterprise, and public improvement, so essential to the preservation and development of popular institutions, as well as that of humanity and religion, die out before the passion for military glory.

It is connected with standing armies, foreign and domestic war,

anarchy and confusion. How is it with the Mexican republic, where the military spirit has such sway, notwithstanding the comparative imbecility of her soldiery? She is continually embroiled in internal strife. The parts are without cohesion. The elements of the nation are unsettled, discordant and chaotic, as if each repelled all others from contact or approach. The domestic dissensions and violence have furnished occasion for the present war. The chief officers of her government are a succession of military adventurers, and the most fortunate, and successful soldier is President. The country is a sort of army in camp, and general Herrera commands to day, general Almonte to-morrow, and general Santa Anna on the third; and the business of the people is to watch the revolutions, and see what name turns up to be put after the word *General*. Whenever the Mexicans should have as good a general as Taylor, at the head of the army, and he might be disposed to rule the country, he would only have to take his army to the capital, and order the President to retire, and take the reins into his own hands, and that would constitute his election. That is Mexican republicanism. And such will all republicanism be too likely to be found, where the military spirit predominates among a people. The army will choose the President. Instruments of war will be the tickets, and one musket will count more than a hundred paper votes.

Though we may hope that God in his mercy, may avert from us such calamities as these, yet it is a part of the precaution which we should take for our well being and safety, to check every sympton of the spirit which leads to such a result. Now every war kindles up a degree of military ardor in the community. We see it in the interest which gathers around the progress of a contending army; we behold it in the enthusiasm which kindles at the report of a bloody but successful battle; we witness it in the acclamations of thunder in which the whole American people seem to lift up their mighty voice in praise to him who leads on the armed columns to victory.

Men rush to the contest not only to gratify their own martial passion, but to partake in the glory which crowns great feats of arms. The military feeling is too easily excited in this country for our welfare. It is one of the most unfavorable signs of our political times, that

brilliant success in war is such a ready passport to the highest confidence and estimation of the people. It seems as if the skill that can gain a battle, was connected in very many minds, with every talent and virtue under heaven. Because we have had a General Washington, who gave victory to our arms, many seem to think that all successful generals must be Washingtons, and that the exchange of a conquering sword for the sceptre of civil dominion in the father of his country, has fixed the model for all succeeding ages. So war has become a manufacturing of candidates for office. Every new field of blood is another step towards the civil promotion of some of the combatants—to shoot and be shot at, is a qualification for office; hence men will put on the plume and epaulette, and hasten to the scene of strife, to gain political distinction by killing men. General Taylor's camp has rivalled Congress with multitudes who thirst for distinction, and the road to Mexico has become the path to the highest honors of the state. Some of the members of Congress have exchanged the Honorable for the Colonel, and have left the arena of combat at Washington, for the bloody field of Mexico, to gain by the valorous use of the sword, that elevation which they could not reach by eloquence of debate. The common soldier who cannot lift his eyes so high as to the summits of political distinction, hurries away from the quiet pursuits of life, to partake in the strifes of a successful campaign and acquire a petty renown among the inhabitants of his native village. When shall a just estimate of the requisites of our national safety, and a proper application of those talents and pursuits, which tend in the highest manner to develope the humane and noble theory of our republican institutions, check that excess of military feeling which bestows such undue honors on the achievements of mighty warriors?

The ambition which so many indulge to gain distinction in the bloody field, suggests some thoughts which are a digression from the subject, but with which it may not be improper to close this discourse.

How many go to Mexico in pursuit of glory, and it is equally true of all scenes of deadly strife, that find an obscure and unremembered grave; thrown in heaps into a great pit on the battle-field, where they poured their blood, without coffins, without ceremony, and covered like beasts, with not a stone to tell where, and how they died. This is a

common fate of the private soldier, who dies on the field of combat; he is undistinguished and forgotten amidst the throng of his comrades. And then for the brave officer who falls fighting gloriously for his country, and whose name will be recorded in the praises of his countrymen; what a poor consolation is the anticipated remembrance of his valor, in the pain and exhaustion of the dying moment, and when his spirit is just about to appear in the presence of its Judge. In the battle of Saratoga there was an officer in the British army called Colonel Frazer. I have heard it stated that he was a native of Scotland, and that his father, or ancestor was concerned in the rebellion of 1745; you recollect the issue of that rebellion. The insurgents were subdued; their titles were taken from those of noble blood; and their estates confiscated. It is said the family with which he was connected, was one of distinction, and that it shared the common fate; and that himself dishonored, and dispirited, sought distinction on the continent of Europe; but that when our revolutionary war broke out, he came back for the purpose of engaging in the British service, and redeeming the lost honor of his father's house. However this may be, he entered the King's army, and came to the Colonies to contend for the rights of the crown. He fought in the battle of Stillwater; he was such an active and gallant officer, that he attracted the particular notice of the American commander, who signified to his riflemen, that it was important for the successful issue of the battle, that he be taken off; he expressed his regret for the necessity of his order, but declared he must die. The riflemen obeyed the command. In a short time a bullet pierced his vitals; he was taken down to the banks of the Hudson, about two miles from the battle-field, and there in a little house, the remains of which I saw about two years since, he lingered out a few hours of agony, and then expired. As he lay on his bloody couch, all hopes of life being extinct, he was often heard to exclaim, O fatal ambition! O fatal ambition! He had thought if he could come to America, and perform some brilliant achievement in war, he should go back to his native land, covered with glory. He accordingly put forth all the energies of his courage and valor; and was the best officer in Burgoyne's army. As I surveyed the place where he laid down his life and honor, I thought that the desolate spot, and the decayed lit-

tle house in which he died, were the most fitting monuments of the destroyed hopes of the aspiring and infatuated man. If we could hope that those whose visions of earthly ambition are ended by a fatal stroke on the field of war, were prepared for other and nobler honors above, it would alleviate the melancholy which surrounds their fate; but of how few who fall in glorious fight can such a hope be entertained. In what an unfitting state of mind do most of them enter upon the future. You reccollect perhaps the account given us of the death of Major Ringgold from Baltimore. He commanded in the artillery, in the battles of Palo Alto and Rescaca de la Palma. Both of his legs were shattered by a cannon shot from the enemy. After the requisite surgical operations had been performed, he lay quietly, and, experiencing little or no pain, was able to converse easily with his attendants; he was made fully aware of the hopelessness of his condition. Do you remember on what subjects he conversed, when he lay waiting his end? He expressed no solicitude for his spiritual condition; he said nothing of the necessity of penitence, faith, purity of heart, and of the solemnity of appearing before God. He employed his last moments in descanting on the precision with which he directed the aim of his great guns, the successful shots which he had made, and the number of the Mexicans who had fallen by the discharge of his artillery. These were the consolations with which he solaced his dying hour. Oh what an undesirable state of mind in which to appear in the presence of God! He went into eternity exulting at the blood which he had shed; and priding himself on his skill as a marksman in shooting down men. No doubt the officer thought he had been doing his duty; but it was a bloody duty, and ought to have been too painful an one to be the source of comfort to a dying man. But such are the feelings with which many warriors quit the world. Such is the preparation which is too commonly given by war, for the retributions of the coming life.

May God deliver our countrymen from coveting their neighbor's lands—from the lust of conquest—from the spirit of war—the thirst for human blood. May the love of peace be shed into the counsels of both the contending nations. May the voice of war, "the thunder of the captains and the shouting," the exultation of bloody triumphs, the cries of the wounded and dying, and the lamentations of widows and orphans, no longer vex the ears, and distress the feelings of the American people.

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